

Reflections of the nearness and distance of sphere and terra, of Far Eastern and Western culture, of rootedness and uprootedness -.

An interview between Mina Ton and Anja C. M. Schönau

Anja C. M. Schönau:

What do you explore in your artistic work?

Mina Ton:

The proximity and distance of sphere and terra, of Far Eastern and Western culture, and the question of how they can be combined.

Anja C. M. Schönau:

We sometimes speak of a sphere of memory. What do you notice when you watch yourself remembering?

Mina Ton:

My personality, both German and Vietnamese.

Anja C. M. Schönau:

Do you remember or are you remembered by something?

Mina Ton:

Sometimes like this, sometimes like that.

Anja C. M. Schönau:

Do memories appear by themselves or are they bound to something?

Mina Ton:

Seeing myself sometimes brings back memories. Mostly in conversation with family and friends. And especially on festivities like Christmas with my boyfriend and his family or the Vietnamese New Year at my parents' house. Nevertheless, there is the great commonality that both celebrations are about family.

Anja C. M. Schönau:

Which place triggers your memories in particular? Or is it not a place?

Mina Ton:

Actually, when I go on mountain hikes. I really like to observe interesting rock structures. My mobile phone is full of photos of such structures. I compare them very often with the rock formations in Halong Bay. In 2018, I was there and saw these huge, hundred-metre-high rocks sticking out of the water. The structures have stayed very much in my mind. It's strange when you don't feel at home in the country where your real roots are.

Anja C. M. Schönau

Do you need any anecdote, stories, photos or other documents?

Mina Ton:

For me, my own self and a look in the mirror are usually enough. A woman who grew up between two different worlds and cannot and will not really put down deep roots in either of them.

Anja C. M. Schönau:

Is there also a paradoxical character inherent in your work?

Mina Ton:

Where is the border between Vietnamese and German thinking? How do I bring all this together?

Anja C. M. Schönau:

In your view, what does a vibrant cultural memory need? Active or passive participation? Or both?

Mina Ton:

Predominantly active participation! Participation in the festivals, customs, meals, ... and a lot of social interaction.

Anja C. M. Schönau:

Thank you for this reflexive, intercultural insight into your thoughts and memories.

The interview was conducted by Anja C. M. Schönau, Academic Lecturer in Textile Art & Textile Design, Transmedia Processes, Intermedia & Stop Motion, Ceramics and Porcelain, Paper in Space,

Drawing, Environmental and Product Design with Mina Ton, student and participant in the Ceramics and Porcelain seminar.